

In the Matter of

CC Docket 95-155

Toll-Free Service Access Codes

**U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE
PETITION FOR PERMANENT REASSIGNMENT OF
THE TOLL-FREE NUMBER 1-800-US-REWARD**

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The United States Department of State, through its attorneys and pursuant to section 47 C.F.R. § 1.41 of the Federal Communications Commission (FCC or the “Commission”) rules, hereby respectfully requests that the Commission permanently reassign 1-800-US-REWARD (1-800-877-3927) to the Department of State (or “the Department”). For more than 15 years, the Department has continuously used the 1-800-US-REWARD toll-free number in the domestic and international public space as a primary method for the public to communicate terrorism-related information to the Department’s Rewards for Justice Program. TellNet Communications, Inc., operated by Mr. Nathaniel Hart, is the subscriber of record for the toll-free number. Mr. Hart, as explained in attachment A, has expressed interest in ceasing to service this telephone number and does not oppose the transfer of the number to the Responsible Organization of the Department’s choosing. Permanent reassignment of the toll-free number to the Department would enable it to continue to accept terrorism-related information from around the world, prevent the potential loss of critical counter-terrorism information, and help ensure the security of human sources.

Therefore, the Department urges the Commission to permanently reassign 1-800-US-REWARD to the responsible organization of the Department's choosing in the public interest.

I. BACKGROUND ON THE REWARDS FOR JUSTICE PROGRAM AND 1-800-US-REWARD

The Rewards for Justice Program is the Department of State's Counter-Terrorism rewards program. It was established by the 1984 Act to Combat International Terrorism, P.L. 98-533 (codified at 22 U.S.C. § 2708). Administered by the Department's Bureau of Diplomatic Security, the Reward for Justice Program's goal is to bring international terrorists to justice and prevent acts of international terrorism against United States persons or property. Under this program, the Secretary of State may authorize rewards for information that leads to certain counter-terrorism outcomes, including the identification or location of a key terrorist leader, the arrest or conviction in any country of any individual for the commission of an act of international terrorism against a U.S. person or U.S. property, or the prevention, frustration, or favorable resolution of an act of international terrorism against a U.S. person or U.S. property. The information for which a reward may be paid frequently originates outside of the United States.

For more than 15 years, the 1-800-US-REWARD toll-free number has functioned as a primary method for members of the public to communicate with the Rewards for Justice program. The Rewards for Justice program advertises the telephone number throughout the world to reach potential informants in places such as Afghanistan, Colombia, Europe, the Horn of Africa, Iraq, Philippines, Tajikistan, and Turkey. To publicize the program and the number in the communities that may have counter-terrorism information, the Department has distributed the number on matchbooks that find their way to rural areas, posters hung in transportation hubs and police stations, leaflets dropped from aircraft across large and remote areas, and handbills

distributed by security forces along porous borders. The Rewards for Justice program has also advertised the number in newspapers, magazines, and pamphlets, and has distributed it on business cards, pens, and soccer balls. These advertising materials have been translated into more than thirty languages. Given the breadth of the advertising distribution over 15 years, loss of the use of this phone number would jeopardize the Department's ability to gain information from sources who learn of the number from these extensive advertising efforts and seek to provide counter-terrorism information to the Department.

II. THE DEPARTMENT OF STATE'S OPERATION OF 1-800-US-REWARD IS CRITICAL TO ENSURING THAT INFORMATION ABOUT TERRORISM REMAINS AVAILABLE FOR THE NATIONAL DEFENSE

Permanent reassignment of the toll-free number to the Department advances national defense and public safety and would be in the public interest. The Rewards for Justice program, designed to assist in the prevention of acts of international terrorism, is a key element of the U.S. government's counter-terrorism program. Its reward offers have contributed to bringing terrorists to justice and to preventing acts of international terrorism against U.S. persons and property. Achieving the United States government's counter-terrorism objectives requires reliable, real-time information to reach the Department. The Department, for over 15 years, has relied on this telephone number as the primary outreach to the public, and potential informants can be sure that they are reaching the Department and not some other organization, or worse, a scam operation. It is in the public interest to ensure that terrorism-related information from informants is not redirected to commercial entities by reassignment of the number through the first-come, first-served mechanism.

III. THE COMMISSION HAS THE AUTHORITY TO ASSIGN 1-800-US-REWARD TO THE DEPARTMENT OF STATE

The Commission has the exclusive authority to assign numbers under the Communications Act, 47 U.S.C. § 251(e)(1), and is charged with exercising its jurisdiction to ensure the efficient, fair, and orderly allocation of toll-free numbers.¹ Although the Commission generally makes toll-free numbers available on a first-come, first-served basis to ensure that they are distributed equitably, 47 C.F.R. § 52.111 provides that “[t]oll free numbers shall be made available on a first-come, first-served basis *unless otherwise directed by the Commission.*” *Id.* (emphasis added). The Commission has a statutory mandate to regulate wire and radio communication services for the purpose of national defense and to promote the safety of life and property. 47 C.F.R. § 151.

The Commission has directed the permanent reassignment of toll-free numbers in the public interest in analogous cases. In In the Matter of U.S. Dep't of Health & Human Servs. Substance Abuse & Mental Health Servs. Admin. Petition for Permanent Reassignment of Three Toll-free Suicide Prevention Hotline Numbers, 27 F.C.C. Rcd. 2965 (2012), the Commission directed the permanent reassignment of a toll-free suicide hotline in light of the compelling public interest consideration of suicide prevention. *Id.* at 2968. The Commission directed the reassignment so that the numbers would “continue to benefit the general public and veterans of the United States.” *Id.* Similarly, in In the Matter of Toll Free Service Access Codes, 21 FCC Rcd. 9225 (2006), the FCC permanently assigned two toll-free numbers to the American National Red Cross, pursuant to the FCC’s “exclusive jurisdiction over number resources and its statutory obligation to consider and advance public safety.” *Id.* at 9226.

¹ See Second Report and Order, 12 FCC Rcd. 11162 (1997) (explaining that Section 1 and Title II of the Communications Act of 1934 require the FCC to ensure that toll-free numbers are assigned and used in an efficient, fair, and orderly manner). See also Toll-free Service Access Codes, Fourth Report and Order, 13 FCC Rcd. 9058 (1998); Toll-free Service Access Codes, Fifth Report and Order, 15 FCC Rcd. 11939 (2000).

As in the cases regarding the reassignments of 1-800-RED-CROSS and 1-800-SUICIDE and associated numbers, reassignment of 1-800-US-REWARD is in the public interest and would serve to advance the FCC's statutory obligation to consider and advance public safety and the national defense. Continued use of the 1-800-US-REWARD number is important to ensuring that the Department's Rewards for Justice Program meets its mandate of preventing terrorist attacks by providing rewards for reliable information that leads to key counter-terrorism objectives. The reassignment is unopposed by the current registrant of the toll-free number. *See* Exhibit 1.

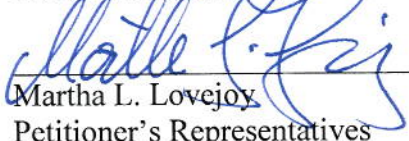
IV. CONCLUSION

Permanent reassignment of the Rewards for Justice toll-free number would serve the FCC's mandate to advance public safety and the national defense by efficient and fair allocation of toll-free numbers. The Department has employed 1-800-US-REWARD to reach informants on terrorism for more than 15 years, and continued operation of the number would ensure that critical counter-terrorism information is not lost or misdirected. The Department of State respectfully requests that the Commission permanently reassign the toll-free number 1-800-US-REWARD to the responsible organization of the Department's choosing at this time.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "K. M. Gleeson", written over a horizontal line.

Kevin M. Gleeson

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Martha L. Lovejoy", written over a horizontal line.

Martha L. Lovejoy

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